

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

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A NEW SWIFT FROM PALESTINE.

BY OUTRAM BANGS.

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The well-known Selah Merrill collection of birds from Palestine was acquired by the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy in July, 1909. In the species and subspecies of the region, except for a few very rare or local forms, it is complete, and most of the species are represented in long series. Though many skins are from other places, and a number were got for him by Arabs, the collection was principally made in the vicinity of Jerusalem during the years 1884-1886 by the late Rev. Dr. Merrill himself.

Some day I hope to publish a catalogue of it, with such notes as were kept by Dr. Merrill in his register, though these in many cases, I am sorry to say, are not entirely satisfactory.

The forms that have long been recognized as peculiar to Palestine and the ones recently described by Hartert during the progress of his "Vögel der Paläarktischen Fauna," appear to be all represented in the Merrill collection.

In the collection the swifts are represented by smaller series than usual, there being three skins of *Apus apus apus* (Linn.), three of *Apus affinis galilejensis* (Autin.), and two of the white-bellied swift. The latter are so very pallid and otherwise different from European specimens that I propose for the Palestine form the name,

***Apus melba petrensis*** subsp. nov.

*Type* from the Jordan Valley, Palestine, no. 59,534, Coll. Mus. Comp. Zool. From the Selah Merrill Coll., taken in April, 1886, original no. "a. 108."

*Characters*.—Similar to true *A. melba* (Linn.) of Europe, but much

paler above and upperparts pale drab, lighter still on forehead and crown, the dusky marking in front of eye consequently very conspicuous; brown band across chest very narrow and the white throat patch large.

*Measurements.*—

No.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Culmen.
59,534 Type	215	87	15.5	9
59,535 Topotype	219	87.5	16	9

*Remarks.*—Our two specimens, neither of which bears any sex mark, were in fully adult plumage, fresh and unworn, and their pallid coloring is not the result of fading.

Hartert, in Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum, Vol. XVI, p. 439, mentions some very pallid skins from the western Himalayas, and from Belgaum, and possibly the pale form described above has a wide breeding range.